



## **MEETING MINUTES / 15 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**\*\*MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS\*\***

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Present: Baldwin, Lopez, Bradley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, McMullen, Miller, Phillips, Sarg, Seppala, Sutton, Showell

Excused: Farley

Guests: Virginia Yelland (Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center), Tina Foskey (Delaware Veterans Home), Michael Green (Delaware Veterans Home), RuthAnn Lander (Delaware Veterans Home), Jessica Finan (Home of the Brave), Dave Skocik (Veterans Coalition), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors)

### **CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:**

Public comments during the Commission meeting will require the Commission up to 48 hours for a response.

### **MEETING MINUTES:**

Prior minutes were motioned to approve by Lardizzone seconded by Bradley

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:**

#### **Wilmington VAMC – Virginia Yelland, Executive Assistant to the Director**

VA is offering Flu shots to enrolled veterans via drive-thru clinics on West entrance of the Wilmington VAMC from 9a.m. to 3p.m. Monday through Friday.

Hours for CBOC's are posted online.

Started phase 2 of moving forward plan for expanded clinic to allow more veterans appointments for gradual return to face to face visits, still handling video visits.

Calls have doubled in call center; a plan is being put in place to control the volume and answer more calls.

(Baldwin) What caused the influx of calls?

Veterans wanting to be seen face to face who haven't been seen for a while. Veterans are uncomfortable with using instant messaging on myhealthvet.gov. It takes longer to do a video call than an in-person call. Veterans calling back after not getting through. Goal is to answer on first call.

(Baldwin) Is there anything on the website indicating procedures for the flu-shot?

Yes, It's Posted

(Baldwin) Is there a parking lot update?

Yes, there is great progress. The parking garage is now able to be seen above ground

(Baldwin) Is the Dover CBOC not conducting X-rays, or is there an outside clinic they can use?

We have never had X-Ray at Dover; we do at Georgetown. That would be coordinated by their provider.

(McMullen) Does the new Dover location have X-Ray?

That is something we are looking at

(McMullen) Is a contract with a local facility an option?

Veterans have always been able to get radiology services if they need it locally, if it's a veteran that can't travel the VA would provide the services locally.

(Bradley) One of our members went to Walgreens for the Flu shot and he couldn't afford it. Why are veterans being sent to Walgreens for Flu shots and then being charged?  
The information in the email produced included a link for non-VA facilities where veterans could receive the shots. We would have to follow up with that specific Walgreens.  
(Sarg) Statement – Annual contract should reduce your overall cost.  
Thank you

**Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Tina Foskey, Director:**

Introduced regulatory specialist Michael Green & Nurse Consultant RuthAnn Lander.  
Census has dropped to 59 due to aging population.  
No COVID symptomatic residents or Employees.  
Still have a 30+ day supply of personal protective equipment on hand.  
Staff being tested weekly for COVID per state guidelines.  
Residents being tested for COVID monthly.  
Received approval and opened for window visitations Tuesday 8 September 2020. About 15 family members per week are using the window visit.  
(Sarg) For your external visits you indicated to have a 10-foot restriction between individuals whereas standards are 6-foot distance. Is there a reason for that?  
The area we are using for the visits is our back patio. The 10-foot distance allows leeway for our staff to assist due to our high population of dementia patients.

**Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:**

We are operating at full capacity at our male facility, that's 15 individuals.  
We currently have 1 resident at our female facility but, have 4 that have applied for residency. That will leave 3 extra beds.  
We have been struggling with donations. We are down \$60k this year. We have captured a couple of COVID grants to keep our doors open. We are closely monitoring funding streams.  
(Baldwin) Have you approached the state for the COVID grant money?  
The portal was closed the same day. The site states it will reopen no later than 1 October. I log in daily for updates.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Dave Skocik, Veterans Coalition  
Continuing our monthly DVA meetings with proper safety measures.  
Working on a direct mail fundraiser.  
Hosting a first time Gala 17 October at Everett Theatre in Middletown to fundraise for Watchmaking Initiative.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:**

Interments – 68 (-12)  
Cemetery only has 7 of 10 flags currently flying  
- Should have two in reserve for each organization

**Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:**

Interments – 29 (-8)  
- Expansion project is complete  
- Cemetery currently fully staffed

**Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:**

Senator Coons sent a letter 11 September in relation to cosponsor senate bill 3761 with Senator John Tester. Introduced Veterans Claim Transparency Act Senate 3761 on 19 May 2020. This would allow veterans representatives, lawyers and agents have 48 hours to review and dispute the VA ratings before the ratings are finalized.

**Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:**

Completed draft of 2021 Legislative recommendations & concerns. It has been forwarded to the commission for review and comments with hope of December meeting vote for presentation when Legislature opens January 2021.

(Baldwin) Possible changes in house leadership could affect HB265. Meeting with possible sponsors after today for possible proposal and placement.

(Sarg) Partial draft has been sent. Section on Delaware Veterans Home is still in works for completion.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:**

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 4; Granted 4 (100%); Awarded \$6,774.88; Balance - \$87,715.00

(Baldwin) What's the status on Executive Director job posting?

Position posted 11 September 2020 and closes 18 September 2020

(Sarg) Will the Commissioners be involved in the hiring process?

Yes, Commissioner Baldwin will represent the Commission

**ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:**

Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA)

10 September 2020 New President, MSgt Benjamin Morgan, called for 2<sup>nd</sup> in person General Memberships Meeting at the Base Bowling Center.

Welcomed new Vice President TSgt Convery and SSgt Charelle to executive committee.

Working to provide needed supplies and beginning a writing campaign to patients at the Delaware Veterans Home.

Sponsoring a POW/MIA Retreat Ceremony 17 September 2020 @ 1600 at base flagpole.

Planning a 5k walk/run/ruck 7 November 2020 @ 0800 beginning at Buffalo Wild Wings in Dover.

International Professional Airman's Conference & Convention scheduled 24-28 August 2020 has been cancelled. However, a very successful virtual symposium was held 25-29 August 2020.

The week of 6-9 October is Legislative Week and we will be storming the hill

Commissioner Miller (American Legion - AL)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AMVETS)

New State Commander, William Willard

Post 2 is having a member's appreciation picnic 20 September 2020

Post 2's charitable donations for 2019 is \$179K through gaming machines, an additional \$91,600 paid to the state.

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)

Held our first meeting 2 September 2020 with 18 people in attendance.

Department Executive Committee passed budget and financial report that goes to national.

52 claims for veterans

Held first Chapter 1 meeting 10 September 2020 in Camden, 12 in attendance.

Assisted veteran with electric bill of \$167 on 11 September 2020.

Department Headquarters roof was replaced 12 September 2020 due to storm damage. Replaced auxiliary conference room tiles and had the carpet shampooed.

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)  
Nothing to Report

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)  
Not present

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)  
MOAA National meeting usually held October each year will be a virtual meeting due to COVID.  
Local chapter meetings are currently being held virtually until further notice due to COVID.

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)  
Held first department meeting 13 September 2020.  
Chapters in Louisiana were damaged due to Hurricane Laurel. Our Chapter provided \$500 towards disaster relief.  
Virtual convention scheduled for 22-24 September 2020 postponed.

Commissioner Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)  
Nothing to Report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)  
Cancelled October golf tournament due to COVID  
Currently no meetings being held in person due to COVID

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)  
No meetings held since the beginning of COVID in March  
Delaware Military Museum held First virtual meeting 14 September 2020  
(Baldwin) Is the Military History Museum open.  
No

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)  
Stand Down meeting being held 24 September 2020 @ 2p.m. at American Legion Post 3 in Milford.  
Meeting will be held in person with a Zoom option for attendance.  
Meeting scheduled with Dover Mayor 16 September 2020 @ 1200 for Crisis Awareness Initiative.  
I stepped in as Chair in place of Commissioner Farley. Due COVID the committee needs new members.  
Planning a meeting within next 2 weeks via Zoom to go over details moving forward with Crisis Awareness Initiative.  
DelVets are currently conducting general member meetings in person and via Zoom.  
Mobility in Motion through Delaware Transit Corporation Board provided packet regarding new updates and changes regarding transit.  
Please provide information regarding a new VA caregiver program that may be coming soon.

Commissioner Sutton (At Large)  
Nothing to Report

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)  
National Guard held Support of Suicide Prevention Awareness event 10 September 2020

**TERM COMPLETION:**

Baldwin – 9 September 2020  
McMullen – 9 September 2020  
Showell – 9 September 2020

**EVENTS:**

Nothing to report

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

(Sarg) Draft copies of Legislative concerns sent to commissioners are not final copies. New commissioners please email to receive a copy.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Nothing to report

**ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

(Baldwin) Request before next meeting we are prepped and familiar with Zoom and its procedures.  
(Baldwin) Propose a hybrid meeting for the next commission meeting allowing in person and Zoom.  
(Seppala) Are we having a Veterans Day Bridge Ceremony this year?  
We are working closely with the state to make the best and safest decision regarding Veterans Day.

**SPECIAL SESSION:**

Nothing to report

**EXECUTIVE MEETING:**

**Thursday, 15 October 2020 at 1000  
Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs**

**NEXT MEETING:**

**LOCATION:**

**Tuesday, 20 October 2020 at 1000  
Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs**